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Several aspects of college-community relations were discussed in this review. In the avocational realm, as well as the vocational, the 2-year college can serve the special needs and interests of the community. Short courses, lecture series, concerts, leisure activities and services, and community use of campus facilities help the community college to meet the challenge of its name. Effective public relations programs must (1) assemble facts on the objectives and resources of the college and on areas of public ignorance and possible criticism; (2) pinpoint its target populations; and (3) make full use of its sources of information, including faculty and staff, students, instructional programs, college events, and community services. A college's image may be enhanced by a clearly defined philosophy, precise objectives, and programs that meet the stated objectives. Advisory committees, which are actively involved in the planning and decision-making processes, help to fulfill the need for 2-way communications between the college and the community. The results of one study, focusing on community opinion, indicated that an association exists between informed individuals and a positive opinion toward the college. Regardless of the means employed, closer college-community relations play an important role in making the college a true "community" college. (MB)

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COLLEGE-COMMUNITY RELATIONS

The emergence of the concept of the public junior college as a community college has been, in the view of B. Lamar Johnson, the most important junior college development of the past 40 years. Greater emphasis is being placed on the "community" aspect of community colleges as the tremendous growth of the past decade continues into the 1970's. Through the provision of community service programs and curricula adapted to the needs of the populace, the community college earns its name. It is obvious, however, that not all community colleges are, in the strict sense, "community" colleges. Some critics have even suggested that the name "community college" is, in far too many instances, a shibboleth. A concerted effort toward the promotion of closer college-community relations is the key to making its name truly descriptive of the role ascribed to it.

This issue of the *Junior College Research Review* examines documents that focus specifically on the issue of college-community relations. They were selected from material received and processed by the ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges. All have been indexed and abstracted in *Research in Education*. Copies of the reports, both in hard copy and microfiche, are available from ERIC Document Reproduction Service.

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Review

The documents reviewed cover a variety of topics bearing on college-community relations: programs designed to serve community needs, public relations, the college image, advisory committees, and community opinion. This *Review* will not undertake an examination of the community service function of the junior college, except where it is touched on within the context of the broad topics listed above.

Programs to Serve Community Needs

The term "community" connotes a close interrelationship between the college and the life of the community; the college looks to the community for suggestions in program planning, then designs programs to serve its constituency. Such a response to the requirements of the particular region served is a hallmark of the community junior college. Several such plans serve to illustrate: forestry technology is emphasized by several colleges in western Washington; agriculture technology, by central California colleges in the San Joaquin Valley; oil technology, by two-year colleges in the Texas oil fields; apparel design, in New York City; and banking, in the Greater Chicago Area. Increasingly, groups of junior colleges are adapting curricula to the economy of a region and, in some instances, are dividing training responsibilities to meet area manpower needs (ED 015 746).

In the avocational realm, as well as the vocational, the two-year college serves the special interests of the community. Short courses, lecture series, concerts, leisure activities and services, and community use of campus facilities – all elements of the community service function – help the community college to meet the challenge of its name.

Public Relations

Public relations are a state of affairs, not an end in and of themselves, and not to be confused with publicity. They are a comprehensive endeavor based on planned actions designed to affect attitudes, stimulate involvement, anticipate controversy, and promote programs. The deeds come first, the words come second (ED 019 050).

The community relations program of the junior college is the result of attention and effort on the part of both the faculty and the administration. Public understanding determines, in large measure, the amount of support, cooperation, and assistance that will be given the college and, ultimately, the amount of benefit derived by its students (ED 014 283).

The term "public relations" tends to connote a negative image, usually associated with supermarket giveaway programs, used-car-lot come-ons, and the straw hats of sideshow barkers. By definition, however, college public relations are the continuing process by which management or administration endeavors to obtain the good will, understanding, and support of its students, faculty, and the public at large – inwardly through self-analysis and correction, outwardly through all means of expression. It may be summarized as doing and telling, 90 per cent and 10 per cent, respectively. Regardless of the definition, a successful public relations program has four essential ingredients: (1) self-analysis and correction, (2) identification with the public interest, (3) involvement, and (4) communications (ED 019 050).

In *Guide to Public Relations for Junior Colleges* (ED 013 647), the overall public relations task is viewed as providing answers to two basic questions: "Is quality education being provided?" and "Is the money being spent efficiently?" The successful operation of any junior college depends on eliminating negative interpretations and establishing prestige – both for the college and for its faculty. Such prestige, however, can be established only when excellence is a fact, and when the fact is communicated effectively. To achieve its goals, the public relations program must (1) assemble facts on the objectives and resources of the college and on areas of public ignorance and possible criticism; (2) pinpoint its target populations; and (3) make full use of its sources of information, including faculty and staff, students, instructional programs, college events, and community services.

The "publics" as targets of the college public relations program are discussed in two of the documents reviewed (ED 013 647, ED 019 050). These publics may be categorized as internal and external. The internal publics consist of the board, faculty, staff, students, alumni, and their parents and families. All others in the community comprise the external publics. The truly effective college-community relations program devotes considerable attention and effort to both categories of public. Abraham Lincoln said, "Public sentiment is everything. With public sentiment, nothing can fail; without it, nothing can succeed. Consequently, he who molds public sentiment goes deeper than he who enacts statutes or pronounces decisions." College personnel charged with molding public sentiment have a responsibility of a magnitude rarely recognized.

Image

The public relations term "image," so often misused, deserves clarification. An image is a reflection of what we are. The creation of an image requires the skillful use of any number of things, but the image is as good and as long-lasting as its original (ED 019 050). One sometimes gets the feeling that the community college, by accepting all comers, projects an image of little prestige. Much appears in the literature of the field about the "image problem" of the community junior college.

Part of this image problem is the result of the community college's lack of identity – lack of agreement within the field regarding philosophy, purposes, and programs–and the defensiveness that accompanies such a void. With a clearly defined philosophy, precise objectives, and programs that meet the stated objectives come self-confidence and a sense of assurance and strength. A positive image is bound to follow a conscious effort at communicating such excellence when it is attained.

Then, and only then, the college can "tell it like it is" with confidence. Even when the message is not altogether positive, it should be told. In this regard, Epperson pleads with the counselors of prospective students to convey a realistic image of the two-year college. Developing junior colleges have five major problems that carry significant consequences for students: (1) limited space and equipment; (2) the nonexistence of a viable educational community compounded by serious program deficiencies; (3) general unavailability of trained faculty and administration; (4) difficulties encountered by students transferring to four-year institutions; and (5) the image of the junior college as a second-class institution, creating prestige problems for its students. If students are allowed to choose after giving full consideration to the strengths and weaknesses of all facets of our diverse system of higher education, those electing the junior college are more likely to hold realistic expectations for their education (ED 016 450).

The image projected by the college will be based on the things it does or does not do, not on what it says. What the college says through the college-community relations program must be in line with what it does (ED 019 050).

Advisory Committees

Advisory committees have become an important and prominent facet of two-year college administration. Their proliferation has resulted from a need for input to the planning and decision-making processes and from a desire by the college to involve representatives of the community in these processes. In a paper dealing with advisory committees in community colleges (ED 014 950), the need for two-way communications between the college and the community is emphasized. Administrative considerations, such as membership qualifications, size, and operation are outlined. A model handbook for advisory committees is displayed, with sections on functions, types, establishment of procedures, effective use of committees, responsibilities of college officials, conduct of meetings, and follow-up of meetings.

Effective use of advisory committees in planning and decision making is an important element in the overall college-community relations program.

Community Opinion

Community opinion of the college can be discerned through institutional research. For this purpose, simple research designs are usually adequate. One such project set out to determine community understanding of the local junior college and its functions. Personal interviews of 367 randomly selected householders were conducted. Of those interviewed, 52.6 per cent had no opinion of the college, 37.9 per cent felt that the college was performing well or adequately, and 9.5 per cent expressed the feeling it was not. In many cases, those who offered an opinion gave no reason for it. No particular segment of the population was found to be more grossly uninformed that any other. The need for more public information regarding the college was apparent (ED 014 984).

Another research project was aimed at assessing the effect of mass circulation of the college newspaper on community opinion regarding the college. One hundred telephone interviews were conducted. The experimental group was composed of those who received both the student paper and the community paper. The control group consisted of those who did not read the student newspaper, as they did not subscribe to the other with which it was distributed. Among questions asked were "Do you believe the college is meeting the educational needs of its students?" and "How do you feel the behavior of the students compares with that of others throughout the United States?" Those exposed to the student newspaper rated both the performance of the college and the behavior of its students higher than did those in the control group. Also, the response "no opinion" was less prevalent among those in the experimental group. The results supported the hypothesis that an association exists between informed individuals and a positive opinion toward the college (ED 014 985).

Summary

College-community relations are promoted in various ways, some of which are encompassed in the public relations program. The results of the total endeavor are reflected in the image and community opinion of the college. Closer college-community relations, achieved through whatever means the college directly or indirectly employs, are important to the goal of making every community college a true "community" college.

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Abstracts of documents processed in the ERIC system may be found in *Research in Education*, a publication of the U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. *Research in Education* may be ordered from the Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

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A companion volume to *RIE* is *Current Index to Journals in Education*, an announcement service that catalogs and indexes journal and periodical literature in the field of education. More than 200 educational journals are included in each issue.

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OFF THE PRESS

A November release in the ERIC/AAJC publications series is Monograph Number 8, Allan S. Hurlburt's *State Master Plans for Community Colleges*. In the foreword, James L. Wattenbarger of the University of Florida writes, "As a person who has actively participated in such planning, Allan S. Hurlburt of Duke University . . . is in an unusually good position to draw some conclusions regarding master planning for junior colleges." Continuing, Wattenbarger states,

> In this monograph he [Hurlburt] outlines some generalities relative to master planning, describes some outstanding examples, and derives some basic principles that will be useful to those who wish to analyze successful master planning. As one basis for these derivations, he has used the master plans for community colleges from 19 states. This contribution to the literature on the coordination and control of higher education will be most useful to the serious student in the field, as well as those whose interests are centered on solving their own specific problems.

Copies may be ordered from the Publications Department of AAJC at $2.00 each. (All orders of less than $5.00 must be prepaid.)

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